

From Phila. library file 06/08

The Explorations of James Brewton

his most successful medium. James E. Brewton's work is brimming with subjectivity. It takes both emotions and intellect to approach it. This much is certain — although Brewton's mature work doesn't pose the same threat to easy equilibrium it once did, it continues to look good. This is a worthwhile show.



James E. Brewton with painting.

view make a direct Expressionist statement. In his later work we encounter nostalgic echoes of anti-art in which the artist aggressively, sometimes with wit, attempted to jar conventional values and provoke positive responses.

Dream Objects

Included are his canvases of bleak gray-silver, with many mutations of the surface that pay homage to scribble-contoured old walls. Language symbols in these are poised with gentle asymmetry, and one sees discreet emphasis on counterpoint. In all his later work, color is kept to a minimum as if to give the artist's imagination free rein.

One approaches some of Brewton's other offerings at the level of games or puzzles, or as ideas for art. He sometimes decorated such boxes and constructions with words, which offer the sort of explanation that only compounds an enigma. These items fall into the category of dream objects. Then there are the mixed-media graphics, which are

JAMES E. BREWTON belonged to the post-World War II generation of the late 1940s that was very involved with new art. He was an ex-Marine and a pacifist. And his prospects as a painter-printmaker were bright when he died in Philadelphia four years ago at the age of 37. No provincial, he was completely aware what was going on esthetically, and his work reacted to and denied many of what he believed were the false concerns of Art (with a capital "A").

Jim Brewton was not trying to put art down. Rather he was just trying to swing it around a bit, in the belief that art can be something else once in a while. Jim Brewton believed people should at least make an attempt to see things in a different way. His own viewpoint is spotlighted in an exhibition at Kenmore Galleries, 122 S. 18th st. (to May 15) of his paintings, constructions and prints, on sale to benefit needy students at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the art school he attended.

The few early paintings on

Paul Ingham - Seen May 8/1971 Dredger